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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/13/2012
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SUBJECT: ZEBARI BELIEVES MALIKI HAS TURNED AGAINST SOFA,
SFA

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶1.](#) (S) Following the mid-year Security Council review of the MNF-I and DFI mandates June 13, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari spoke privately to Amb Khalilzad on the margins of a lunch with Security Council PermReps. Zebari shared his assessment that Prime Minister Maliki no longer seeks a SOFA and SFA with the United States.

[¶2.](#) (S) Zebari attributed the change in Maliki's view to three factors. First, the Prime Minister now has greater confidence in the capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces and therefore believes he no longer needs MNF-I support. Second, clerics in Qom and Najaf have reportedly issued fatwas against both the SOFA and SFA. Third, the Prime Minister is under a lot of pressure from Iran. While Zebari did not accompany Maliki on his recent trip to Iran, the Foreign Minister understands Maliki was told not to enter into these agreements by Tehran. Zebari said he had unsuccessfully tried to reach the Prime Minister in Jordan by phone June 13.

[¶3.](#) (S) Zebari also told Amb Khalilzad that both Ahmed Chalabi and Ibrahim Ja'fari are opposed to the SOFA/SFA. Switching topics, the Foreign Minister highlighted the positive shift in the position of Iraq's Sunni Arab community. He said, "The seeds we planted have born fruit." But he added that it is important to consolidate this achievement before the Sunni Arabs drift back into disaffection and opposition.
Khalilzad